the influence of the persons responsible for encroachments, as most of them are retired senior Railway officials; and

(c) in what manner Government propose to provide free access to passengers for Anand Vihar Railway Station who are facing the problem for a very long time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The Deputy Commissioner, East District, Delhi was approached to get the gates removed; and despite reminders no action has so far been taken.

(b) No. Sir.

(c) The gates were crcted by a Cooperative housing society and manned by Chowkidars for security reasons and closed during night. As the gates arc not in Railway land, the matter has been referred to the Civil Authorities for getting the gates removed for the larger interest of Railway passengers.

Harassment of passengers in Tatkal Coach of Saraighat Express

2935. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item, "Cooped up with crooks on train" appearing in the "Statesman" dated 14.3.99 regarding harassment to passengers of the Tatkjal coach of Howrah bound 3046 Saraighat Express on 12.3.99;

(b) the action taken so far by the Railways in this incident; and

(c) the short term and long term action plan of government to prevent recurrence of such harsassement to the passengers.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Rail projects in U.P.

2936. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of ongoing rail projects in Uttar Pradesh since last three years, till date;

(b) what is the stipulated date for completion of these projects, alongwith the status of the progress made so far; and

(c) the funds provided for above projects during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) The details of ongoing Railway Projects are available in the White Paper on Railway Projects placed in Parliament on 28.7.1998. Allocation of funds to Railway projects is a need based exercise where the relative priority of the project depending upon its physical progress, operational importance, national and strategic significance and social desirability; is the guiding factor. A number of Railway projects span across more than one State. Therefore, State/Regional boundaries are not a criterion for deciding Railway investments. Statwise details of Railway Projects are, therefore, not maintained.

Passenger Facilities at Railways Stations in Andhra Pradesh

2937. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been negligible improvement in passenger facilities at Railway Stations in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is a fact that second class passengers arc not given any accommodation for overnight stay at stations, like Vijayawada;

(c) whether South Central Railway has noticed a lack of over-night facilities at stations;

(d) which are the worst affected stations in terms of lack of faielities for ordinary passengers; and

(c) the steps proposed to improve facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir. Works relating to improvements in facilities at stations arc taken up regularly wherever so warranted depending on the availability of funds.

(b) Vijayawada station is provided with 2385 sqm. of waiting area near booking free and separate waiting hall for ladies and gents on platform No. 6/7 which is used by the second class ticket holding passengers.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Basic Amenities based on importance of the stations have already been provided. There is no deficiency.

(c) Improvements to the stations is a continuous process and works in this regard arc taken up at stations wherever so warranted through the annual Works Programmes of the Railways. An amount of Rs. 7.28 crore has been earmarked to South Central Railway for improving passenger amenities at stations on the Railway which includes the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Development of tourism by the Railways

2938. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ministry of Railways has a scheme for the development of tourism;

(b) if so, what is that scheme;

(c) whether the scheme would be implemented in 1999-2000;

(d) if so, what would be the contribution of Railways in that scheme; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Government of India is celebrating Explore India Millenium Year 1999-2000 and Ministry of Railways is initiating more and more schemes for promotion of rail based tourism.

In this context the following steps have been taken;

(1) Indian Airlines have been appointed as General Sales Agents for sale of Indrail passes through their world wide network. Similar arrangements arc being negotiated with Air India.

(2) The tariff for Indrail Passes has been reduced by 10% in certain categories to attract foreign tourists.

(3) The Explore India Millenium year logo will be printed on the computerised reservation tickets for wider publicity.

(4) It is proposed to organise more trips of steam trains.

(5) Special coaches will be attached for movement of tourists on selected trains.

(6) Passenger Reservation System terminals arc proposed to be provided to the travel industry.

(7) It has been decided to establish a Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation as a public sector undertaking for development of tourism infrastructure and hospitality services.

Defective Rail tracks

2939. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of rail tracks arc defective which cause several accidents;